

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In light of the amendments to the claims presented herein and the following remarks, reexamination and reconsideration of this application, withdrawal of the rejections, and formal notification of the allowability of all claims as presented are earnestly solicited. As detailed in the Office Action mailed December 12, 2006, Claims 1-42 are pending, wherein Claims 1-7, 9, 12-15, 17-23, 25, 27-29, 31-38, 40, and 42 have been rejected and Claims 8, 10, 11, 16, 24, 26, 30, 39, and 41 have been objected to, but indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response to the Office Action, Claims 1, 18, and 32 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 8, 24, and 39, respectively. As such, Claims 8, 24, and 39 have essentially been rewritten in independent form. Claims 2-8, 20-24, and 33-39 have also been cancelled. The Applicants thus submit that, as indicated under *Allowable Subject Matter* in the Office Action, the claims now define patentable subject matter over the prior art cited in the Office Action. Accordingly, notice to such effect is requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Claim Objections

Claim 20 was objected to in the Office Action for informalities. In response, Claim 20 has been cancelled, thereby rendering this objection moot.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, 12- 15, 18, 19, 27-29, 32, and 33 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,614,670 to Nazarian *et al.* In response, Claim 1, upon which Claims 2, and 12-15 depend; Claim 18, upon which Claims 19 and 27-29 depend; and Claim 32, upon which Claim 33 depends, have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 8, 24, and 39, respectively. Claims 8, 24, and 39, as well as Claims 2-7, 20-23, and 33-38, have also been cancelled. By incorporating the subject matter of Claims 8, 24, and 39 into Claims 1, 18, and 32, respectively, the Applicants have essentially rewritten Claims 8, 24, and 39 in independent form, as indicated in the Office Action under *Allowable Subject Matter*. The Applicants thus submit

that amended Claims 1, 18, and 32, as well as Claims 12-15, 19, 27-29, and 33 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the Nazarian '670 patent cited in the Office Action and, as such, are believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3-7, 9, 17, 20-23, 25, 31, 34-38, 40, and 42 were rejected as being obvious over the Nazarian '670 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,952,561 to Jaselskis *et al.* and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,132,871 to Densham *et al.* As previously discussed, Claim 1, upon which Claims 3-7, 9, and 17 depend; Claim 18, upon which Claims 20-23, 25, and 31 depend; and Claim 32, upon which Claims 34-38, 40, and 42 depend, have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of Claims 8, 24, and 39, respectively. Claims 8, 24, and 39, as well as Claims 2-7, 20-23, and 33-38, have also been cancelled. By incorporating the subject matter of Claims 8, 24, and 39 into Claims 1, 18, and 32, respectively, the Applicants have essentially rewritten Claims 8, 24, and 39 in independent form, as indicated in the Office Action under ***Allowable Subject Matter***. As such, the Applicants thus submit that amended Claims 1, 18, and 32, as well as Claims 9, 17, 25, 31, 40, and 42 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the Nazarian '670, Jaselskis '561, and Densham '871 patents cited in the Office Action and, as such, are believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for the reasons set forth above, the Applicants submit that all claims now pending are in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, notice to such effect is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest opportunity.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

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Respectfully submitted,

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